

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1292

By Rinks

A RESOLUTION to recognize Frank Wycheck of the Tennessee Titans on the occasion of his retirement from the NFL.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who in their years of work have distinguished themselves in their respective fields and who have brought honor to Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Frank Wycheck is one such estimable person who has reached the highest level of accomplishment during his career, having established himself as one of the greatest Tight Ends in the history of the National Football League; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wycheck showed signs of being destined for greatness from his early years in Philadelphia; born on October 10, 1971, he lettered in basketball and baseball, as well as football, at Archbishop Ryan High School; and

WHEREAS, on the gridiron, he earned recognition as a member of the All-Catholic, All-City, and All-Scholastic Football Teams, as well as *Northeast Times* Catholic Offensive Player of the Year while leading the Raiders to their first Catholic League Championship as a Senior Captain; and

WHEREAS, this gifted athlete earned a football scholarship to the University of Maryland, where he played three seasons for the Terrapins and became the team's all-time leading receiver with 134 receptions for 1,195 yards; he also established the season record with 58 receptions for 509 yards and the single-game record for receptions with fourteen against Virginia Tech in his first collegiate game; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wycheck joined the fortunate few who are sufficiently talented and dedicated to play football professionally when he was drafted in the sixth round (160th overall) of

the 1993 draft by the Washington Redskins after leaving Maryland with a year of eligibility remaining; and

WHEREAS, after two seasons and 18 games in Washington, the Redskins placed Wycheck on waivers, where he was claimed by the Houston Oilers in a move that would prove to be one of the greatest ever made by team management; and

WHEREAS, on a fateful day in August, the team entered into two deals that were incredibly momentous for the team and this State; in a interesting twist of fate, Frank Wycheck joined the franchise on the day that the organization entered into an exclusive agreement to negotiate with Nashville concerning the relocation of the franchise; and

WHEREAS, soon, the Oilers, who would later become the Titans, had finalized their plans to move to the Capitol city of this State, and Frank Wycheck was well on his way to becoming one of the greatest and most beloved players in franchise history; and

WHEREAS, during his first season with the Oilers, he played in every game, starting ten, and finishing finished third on the team in receiving with 40 catches for 471 yards and two touchdowns; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, he began a streak of five consecutive seasons of leading the team in receptions, becoming only the second player in team history and the fourth tight end in league history to do so; and

WHEREAS, he established a career high in receptions during the 1998 season with seventy and matched that total in 2000; and

WHEREAS, in nine seasons wearing an Oilers/Titans uniform, Mr. Wycheck totaled 482 receptions for 4,958 yards and 27 touchdowns, ranking third, sixth, and seventh, respectively, in the team's all-time record book; and

WHEREAS, including his two-years with the Washington Redskins, he hauled in 505 receptions for 5,126 yards and 28 touchdowns, totals that were second only to Sterling Sharpe among Tight Ends from 1993-2003; and

WHEREAS, Frank Wycheck's 155 career games included 137 with the Titans; he played in 121 consecutive contests between 1995 and 2002, including a streak of 111 starts and a team-record 99 consecutive games in which he caught a pass; and

WHEREAS, known throughout the league as one of the truly great competitors in professional football who maximized his talent, he was chosen and played in the Pro Bowl following the 1998, 1999, and 2000 seasons; and

WHEREAS, he finished his career ranked fourth in career receptions among Tight Ends, behind only Shannon Sharpe, Ozzie Newsome, and Kellen Winslow; and

WHEREAS, he will perhaps be best remembered by fans of the Titans for his pivotal role in the most memorable play in the team's history; with the Titans trailing 16-15 with only seconds remaining in the Wild Card playoff game against the Buffalo Bills on January 8, 2001, he took a pitch from Lorenzo Neal on a kickoff return and ran a few yards before tossing a perfect lateral across the field to Kevin Dyson, who was then escorted seventy-five yards by a host of blockers for the game-winning touchdown in a play that would go down in sports history as the "Music City Miracle"; and

WHEREAS, memories of Frank Wycheck's terrific career are invariably full of praise for him as a player, professional, teammate, and wonderful human being; and

WHEREAS, Coach Jeff Fisher commented, "I think the ultimate individual accomplishment is when you can stand up, hold your head up high and walk away from this game on your own terms. And that's what he's done. Very, very few players in this league are able to do that nowadays, and that's what he's done . . . To be ranked number four on the all-time list of receivers as tight ends in the National Football League with three Hall of Famers, and his time's coming. Frank, it was a pleasure. Words can't express what it was like to have you as a part of this team"; and

WHEREAS, as the man who most directly relied on Frank Wycheck for many seasons, Titans Quarterback Steve McNair possessed a unique knowledge of his Tight End's worth and recalled, "We arrived in Houston together, and from then on I knew he was always there. He got me off on the right foot. I could always go to him when I was in trouble. We played so long together we always knew what the other one was thinking. He gave me the confidence to become the quarterback that I have become. It's hard to think of going out there without number 89 in the huddle. I'll miss him, but I want to congratulate him on his retirement and a great career"; and

WHEREAS, Titans Owner, President, and Chairman of the Board K.S. "Bud" Adams, Jr., stated, "Overall, I think he was one of the top players ever to play for us because of what he did both on and off the field. His talent was obvious, and his ultimate compliment was that quarterbacks always trusted him"; and

WHEREAS, General Manager Floyd Reese added, "If you go through and you list all of the things that are important about a football player – productivity, durability, work ethic, teamwork, all of the things that you want to list – Frank has been at the very top of all of those, and that's very unique to say the least. I think the thing I'm probably proudest of at this point is he's starting a first generation for us – a first generation of the guy that got off the plane in Nashville, has lived a career here, has been as good as anybody that's ever played the position, the creator of the "Music City Miracle", all of those things, and now will retire into the community and will be a strong, strong part of that community and I think, from our standpoint, will be somebody that we'll be very, very proud of for a lot of years"; and

WHEREAS, an original Titan, Mr. Wycheck's place in the community is as firmly entrenched as his position in the team's record books; for several years, he has hosted a popular weekly radio show, and he is actively involved in community projects; and

WHEREAS, over four years, he has raised approximately \$130,000 through his Harley Ride for Special Olympics Tennessee, and he plans to continue his laudable relationship with the organization with a fifth annual Harley Ride on May 2, 2004; and

WHEREAS, his professional and civic accomplishments aside, Frank Wycheck strives to uphold the highest standards of family and community values; he is most grateful for the tremendous love and companionship that he shares with his wife, Cherryn, and is the proud and devoted father of two cherished daughters, Deanna and Madison; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wycheck has made an unparalleled impact on Middle Tennessee since moving here with the Titans, and he will undoubtedly continue to be a positive force in the community for many years to come, as he and his family plan to continue to reside in Franklin following his retirement; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that this General Assembly should celebrate Frank Wycheck's magnificent career with him, his wife and daughters, the Titans family, and his legion of fans; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend to Frank Wycheck our congratulations for a historic career, reflect fondly upon the many wonderful memories he provided Titans fans through his gridiron efforts, thank him for his many contributions to the common good of this State, and offer to this distinguished Tennessean our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling life away from the game and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.